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Department of Public Health
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CIRCULAR LETTER: DHCQ 06-10-467

To: Long-Term Care Facility Administrators

From: Paul Dreyer, Ph.D., Associate Commissioner
Grant Carrow, Ph.D., Deputy Director

Date: October 18, 2006

Subject: Revised List of Controlled Substances in Schedule II-V Approved for Inclusion in Long-Term Care Facilities Emergency Kits

Attached to this letter is a copy of the revised list of controlled substances in Schedules II-V that Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCFs) are permitted to store on their premises in a locked kit Emergency Kit. This letter supersedes Circular Letter DHCQ 10-04-445 of November 1, 2004. The Department of Public Health (Department) has developed this policy change due to the availability of liquid analgesics in unit dose / tamper evident packaging. **All Controlled Substances must be in tamper evident packaging.**

This list is developed pursuant to 105CMR 150.008 (E)(1) which states in part:

“The contents of the kit shall be approved by the Department.”

The actual contents of the Emergency Kit are determined by each facility's Medical Director, consulting Pharmacists and the Director of Nursing within the framework established by the Department. The framework continues to allow facility flexibility in choice of Schedule II-V medications. The Department's framework is summarized in the attached list. There is choice of medication within Schedules and amount up to the Maximum number of units allowed for each medication. Long-Term Care Facilities may choose from this list, but are not required to have all items, nor have the maximum quantity permitted.

Facilities that wish to store Schedule VI controlled substances for emergency/initial doses must comply with the requirements related to the procurement, storage, dispensing, administration, recording and disposal of these controlled substances. Further, approval by the LTCFs Medical Director, Pharmacist/Consultant Pharmacist and Director of Nursing is required for the storage of Schedule VI controlled substances, and the use of these controlled substances must be monitored by the LTCFs Quality Assurance and Assessment Committee.

The Department approves the use of automated dispensing devices by LTCFs in place of the traditional locked boxes for controlled substances in Schedule II-VI. Pharmacy providers wishing to use these devices in LTCFs should contact the Board of Registration in Pharmacy at (617) 973-0954 for additional requirements that may apply.

Department staff will review the LTCFs practices at the time of survey. If you have any questions about this issue please call Timothy MacIntyre, Pharmacist, Division of Health Care Quality at (617) 753-8118, or the Drug Control Program at (617) 983-6700.

The Department is providing an Oral Morphine Conversion Chart for the Morphine Sulfate Oral Concentrate 20mg per ml with this letter.

The effective date will be January 1, 2007 to accommodate for adjustments in inventory and the exchanging of Emergency Narcotic Kits.